21 June 1984

Dear Jean:

Please don't forget to send this - I'll need it later

Enclosed you will find the one-page synopsis of "Hemi-Sync in the Classroom" and the master for "A Palliative for Wandering Attention". I made changes to page fifteen of the latter, but that is the only difference from the copy I sent you earlier. I had to guess at the sort of thing you wanted to tell your administrators and teachers back there, so if you think changes are called for in the one-page synopsis, feel free to make them. You know what those people are like far better than I.

We have not discussed the duration of these workshops. We need as much time with the teachers as possible, for not only do they need to be convinced of the efficacy of the method, they also need to understand the basics of it, how to operate the equipment, and how to utilize it to greatest advantage in the classroom. With the administrators the main points are to convince them and give them a basic understanding of its operation. So, I would say that we could do nicely with the administrators in five contact hours: Have them show up at 09:00 for registration, coffee and rolls, begin promptly at 09:30, break at 10:30, resume at 10:45, and stop at 12:00 for lunch. Begin the afternoon session at 13:00, break at 14:15. take up again at 14:30, and end at 15:30.

With the teachers, we need as much time as we can squeeze in without exhausting them. I suggest registration and coffee at 08:30, start at 09:00, break at 10:20, resume at 10:35, and stop for lunch at 12:00. Start the afternoon session at 13:00, break at 14:30, take up again at 14:50, and end the day at 16:30. If you or your friend in the school district think that the time span is excessive, drop thirty minutes from the afternoon -- but we really do need as much time with the teachers as possible. Also, although I don't know the policies of that school district, if they offer in-service credit for this sort of thing, we can use that feature to get feed-back from the teachers. That is, require those teachers who want in-service credit to use Hemi-Sync in their classes for a minimum of fifteen hours and write a report on the results. From our point of view such reports are invaluable. I did that with the workshop in April (although I had to settle for four hours of classroom use due to the number of teachers and the availability of equipment, and four hours is definitely not enough -- I goofed), and I am at work abstracting pertinent parts of their reports for use in your workshop.

If possible, I recommend that you require advance registration. That enables planning, control of the number participating, and greatly reduces confusion on the morning of the workshop. Also, with acknowledgement of their registration, it would be helpful if you were to send them a copy of "A Palliative for Wandering Attention" so that they can read it before the workshop. Reading it should not only help them understand what we are up to, but should give them time to formulate questions for us -- and it should "whet their appetites", so to speak. JoDee and I will have additional hand-outs for them at the workshops.

Oh yes. Sometimes school districts want to know the backgrounds of presenters before they will approve a workshop for in-service credit. Just in case you need it, I am enclosing that.

I am hard at work on the book, trying to complete a few chapters before August so that Bob and I can come to a better understanding of what it should contain, the style of writing, etc. If Bob can get his evaluation of Alan's synthesizer to us soon, Alan will be able to turn out a few more before the workshop. I think it would be good to have some available at that time. I'm sure there will be lots of details that will arise concerning the workshops that you will want to discuss, so I expect that I'll be hearing from you.

Don't wear yourself out at this effort.

Deron

HEMI-SYNC IN THE CLASSROOM

Devon Edrington, a philosophy professor at Tacoma Community College in Washington state, has worked with Robert Monroe, founder of the Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences, to develop a method for focusing attention in the classroom setting. For five years Edrington has used a patented pattern of sounds (called 'Hemi-Sync') masked by neoclassical music in a variety of college courses. He has documented significant improvements in both the cognitive and affective components of learning.

Edrington believes that wandering attention is the bane of education, and that good attentional habits should be established early. Helping students to learn self-control of attention and responsibility for that attention should be initiated in the elementary schools. Accordingly, last year he modified the Hemi-Sync approach he has used at the college level to make it suitable for elementary classrooms. JoDee Owens, a Tacoma Public Schools teacher, utilized it in her first grade class from the first day of school. Initially she used the sounds for several hours each day, gradually diminishing their use as the students developed a "feel" for the kind of attention that brought them success. She found that after two months it was necessary to use Hemi-Sync for only a few minutes to remind her students of the state they should be in for optimum learning. The results amazed her principal, parents, other teachers, and a school district psychologist who evaluated her class. After four weeks her students were performing at a level ordinarily achieved only by the end of the first grade, according to her principal.

In May of this year twenty-four teachers from various school districts in western Washington tried Hemi-Sync with their classes. The students involved ranged from retarded through gifted and from pre-school through high school. These trials cannot be used as the basis for generalizations (positive or negative) about the Hemi-Sync process, since some teachers were able to use the sound patterns for only four hours, which is a grossly inadequate time in which to assess the method. However, it is interesting to note that the eighteen teachers reporting positive results were nearly unanimous in claiming greater "on-task" time for their students. Many of the eighteen seemed even more pleased with the "calm, pleasant, cooperative" atmosphere in their classes. A special education teacher from Aberdeen, Washington, wrote "My evaluations are honest: Certainly in the last weeks of a school year anything that brings eager learning and quietness has to be valuable." This lady told Edrington that she would retire early rather than return to the classroom next September without Hemi-Sync.

Edrington cautions against supposing that Hemi-Sync magically transforms inattentive students into accomplished learners -- the teacher's rôle is crucial, as always. That is why he insists upon calling the method a palliative for wandering attention; it is not a panacea. Hemi-Sync sets the stage for learning, thereby facilitating the teacher's efforts, but nothing will ever replace good teaching.

Use of Hemi-Sync produces an atypical classroom atmosphere: The teacher spends less time on housekeeping and deportment tasks; pupils are more relaxed, cooperative, and interested in learning; on-task time is greatly increased; performance levels are enhanced; some standard classroom procedures and the usual pace of instruction are rendered inappropriate. Thus, a teacher intending to employ this method needs an account of what to expect and how to make the best use of the unique learning environment it produces. But, unlike some learning-enhancement methods, Hemi-Sync does not require extensive teacher training, nor does it require that the teacher give up her/his teaching style. A one-day workshop is adequate to introduce its basic use. There are, of course, nuances and special applications, and to become facile at these, teachers need more training.